

Quick Strokes

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Patricia Wells, expert from Oregon, clues California educators in on Dvorak, the rational keyboard arrangement

Under auspices of the California Business Education Association, Prof. Patricia Wells, of Oregon State University, Corvallis, led a workshop in March, 1980, on the topic "Why Dvorak? Why Not Dvorak?", at the Anaheim Sheraton Hotel.

She reported that Dvorak-skilled operators in her state are, indeed, performing according to their advance billing, and she gave the reasons why the work goes better and faster and with less stress when the keyboard is arranged in Dvorak style.

The traditional keyboard, called qwerty from the keys assigned to the left hand in the third rank, was designed by a teacher whose only qualification in motion and time study was that he was a relative of the inventor of the first practical typewriter, C. L. Sholes.

Small wonder that his design missed the mark widely! In 1870, eight-finger typing was, possibly, a dream; it did not come into practical application for another thirty years. Hence, rhythm in input with eight fingers and a thumb was not a consideration. Neither was economy of motion. It was a triumph to make the clumsy equipment work at all.

Three first-hand reports on the flexible Olivetti ET 221 typewriter

Denise Griffin, of Chicago, and Barbara Blackburn, of Everett, Washington, both expert Dvorak-skilled operators, and Ronald Watson, of Newport Beach, New South Wales, a leading advocate of the Dvorak arrangement and a good operator on it as well, have all done adequate workouts on the Olivetti ET 221, applying its feature of instant conversion to the rational arrangement.

Blackburn calls it a dream machine! and the exclamation point is her own. Griffin probably has more experience on this particular Dvorak-arranged machine than the others and likewise is well sold on it. She and Blackburn met in Minneapolis in April. "Excellent!" says Watson of the flexible Olivetti.

Attendance at an X4DSK meeting



photographer, Yamada

X4DSK is a subcommittee of American National Standards Committee X4 (office machines and supplies), 1828 L St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. The DSK scope is Dvoraklike arrangements for alphanumeric keyboards. Left to right, Philip Davis, chairman, Michael McNeil, member, Karuna McNeil, observer and secretary pro tem, Members Bradley Lessley, Harriet Davis, Albert Kolb. Not shown, Gloria Kolb, observer, Hisao Yamada, observer. Date, October, 1979; place, Kolb home, Seaside, California.

Ronald Watson, keyboard expert from Australia, tours United States

In a realistic impersonation of a whirlwind, Ronald Watson, of Newport Beach and Sydney, New South Wales, met face to face or on the telephone with all the U.S. advocates of the rational, Dvorak keyboard arrangement that he could reach between May 5 and June 4, 1980.

Please excuse us if your name is not mentioned. Watson spent a day with the Davises at Sacramento, conferred with Bradley Lessley, and made the acquaintance of Paul Gakle, of the California state General Services Administration.

With the Thurman Clarks and the Steve Andersons as hosts in Oregon, Watson toured word processing centers using the Dvorak arrangement on their keyboards and found all managements well pleased with their operators' performance. Estimates of the improvement in input paces after the switch to a Dvorak variant range up to 60 per cent.

Among the notables whom Watson met in Oregon were Lou Ellen Weld, Sue George, Helen Baldwin, Prof. Patricia Wells, and Gov. Robert W. Atiyeh.

In Washington, he conferred with Hermione D. Dvorak, Barbara Blackburn, and the remarkable court reporter and transcriber Dan Buxton.

In both states, he talked to branch managements of business equipment manufacturers.

With Bob and Natalie Morton as hosts in Chicago, Watson met with Mike Schmitt, of Olivetti, and with Larry Scheer, of Teletype, and also got a look at the Morton learning system, which, he reports, will offer modifications for various arrangements of characters.

In Virginia, Watson stayed with Lloyd and Inge Burstein and reached by telephone several other American experts on keyboards and character arrangement.

In Massachusetts, he met with Dick Land, of the Harvard University Engineering Science Laboratory, who is a Dvorak-skilled operator and a strong advocate of that arrangement. He also met with a group of human factors researchers from Digital Equipment Corp.

In Vermont, he met at Brandon with Virginia Russell and Belmont and Thelma Adams. Before taking off for the remote West again, he was interviewed for the Burlington Free Press by Reporter Maggie Maurice.

Before leaving, from Los Angeles, for the sand and surf of Newport Beach, he made it a point to call on Al and Gloria Kolb and to visit Al's class in personal typing at the Carmel Middle School, on the Central Coast of California.

Fastest operator types up a storm for Minnesota Word Processing Association

Barbara Blackburn, of Everett, Washington, reports that as of 3 p.m. on April 30, the attendance record at the exhibits at the Minnesota Word Processing Association seminars in Minneapolis was 1582, and she thinks almost every one of these must have stopped at her typewriter.

She was set up at an SCM Coronamatic 7000 in a lobby at the Leamington Hotel there that gives access both to the assembly rooms and the exhibits. The arrangement of characters on her keyboard is close to the Oregon Alternate state standard arrangement, and the pace she reaches, with the briefest of warmups, is in excess of 150 words a minute.

The MWP seminars annually draw a varied crowd from financial institutions, general business, and the business education profession. All matter that is stored for automatic retrieval must be keyed at least once and may also have to be altered from time to time. Hence the importance of efficient input, of which Mrs. Blackburn's performance at a typewriter is so excellent an example.

Mrs. Blackburn works in accounting for General Telephone Northwest. The Guinness Book of World Records for 1980 cites her by name again, giving her on-the-job cruising pace and her new home town. Quick Strokes relies on operators' reports of cruising paces; they know time spent and sheets filled.

University student types Dvorak



Lenora White, first-year student at Colorado State University, Fort Collins, uses a variant of the Dvorak arrangement of characters (on an SCM Electra) for her homework. At school she operates a console into a computer which, unfortunately, is programmed for a qwerty arrangement. She copes, but how much better to adapt the machine to the human being than to constrain the operator to adapt to an arbitrary arrangement on the keyboard!

News from the returned traveller



(By Telephone from Ronald Watson In Australia)

Negotiations are under way between the Australian federal director of Innovation, Canberra, and the Dvorak International Federation for eventual joint sponsorship of an international keyboard productivity contest. A 1981 date is aimed at, and the finals will probably be held in the United States. It is thought that large cash prizes and travel expenses can be arranged for contestants. The DIF address is P.O. Box 73, Portland, Oregon 97207. Above, Watson.

Holly does nobly on retraining. qwerty to Dvorak, at Aetna Life & Casualty

By LURA F. MUDGETT, Administrator,
Employee Education

We are quite excited about the first full-time typist to be retrained to the Dvorak system. Her name is Holly.

As a pretest, Holly took two three-minute timings on the qwerty keyboard, testing at 80 words a minute with 11 errors the first time and 84 words a minute with eight errors the second time.

Our trainer put her on the cassette program developed by Sue George at Portland Community College. In 4 days (5½ hours a day), Holly finished the program. She posttested on the Dvorak at 76 words a minute with one error on a three-minute timing. She then went on to skill building for nine days and is now typing at her former rate, 84 words per minute, with 50% fewer errors than before.

Of course, the real proof will come in her production. We are watching it.

Bibliographic notes

The Australian, May 21, 1979, page 12, "ASK in Australia", 7½ column inches. Refers to "reducing typing effort and increasing speed" and to "Sydney businessman Ronald Watson" as importer of Smith-Corona typewriters featuring the simplified keyboard. Watson telephone number 02-439-5900.

Vydec folder 1P69, for their Vydec 1800 Information Management System.

"Dvorak Keyboard — This optional keyboard arrangement has been proven to speed input and lessen operator fatigue. Operators can also switch back and forth between standard and Dvorak keyboard arrangements." Source, Exxon Information Systems, 9 Vreeland Road, Florham Park, NJ 07932.

Northwest Newsworthy, Vol. 9, No. 9, "Typing whiz to show skills", p. 5. Barbara Blackburn, administrative assistant, disbursements, performs at Dvorak keyboard in Minneapolis. Public Relations, General Telephone Northwest, Everett, Washington.

Cbema NEWSLETTER, Jan. 30, 1973 — under Standards Department, page 4, "New Work Being Considered by Office Machines-Supplies Committee", one item is "a Dvoraklike keyboard implementing the ASCII character set."

Shirley Neill in KAPPAN — a note for your bibliography

Titled "Dvorak vs. Qwerty: Will Tradition Win Again?", an article by Shirley Neill, of Carmichael, California, appears in the Phi Delta KAPPAN for June 1980, starting at page 671. KAPPAN circulates among educators at all levels and of all ranks and in all areas, at least in the United States.

Full of skepticism about the chances of any innovation of any kind in education, the article cites, nevertheless, the authority of Al Kolb, teacher, of Carmel, California, and Thurman Clark, insurance executive, of Portland, Oregon. Both sources have firsthand experience with Dvorak (variant) keyboarding.

Strange! that the schools, thought by merchants and manufacturers to be so hardboiled and unapproachable, see themselves as babes in the wood, perishing from the poor quality of their public relations and already half covered with strawberry leaves.

KAPPAN is published at Box 789, Bloomington, Indiana 47402.

Two qwerty textbooks

Both the books reviewed here are refutations of the old hype about qwerty typing being such a cinch that a student who cannot cope with it must surely be a baddie, unwilling or unable to apply himself or herself.

Both *Typing 1*, by Alan C. Lloyd, Fred E. Winger, and John L. Rowe (McGraw-Hill, 1977), *General Course*, and *Modern College Typewriting*, by Leonard J. West (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977) are thick books. When a major publisher gets around to publishing a text for Dvorak typing, that will be a thick book, too. The difference will be, we predict, that the Dvorak text will carry the students far into vocabulary, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and style, the last also called format or layout.

The testimony to the complications, convolutions, difficulty of qwerty typing lies really in the long series of lessons before the student is allowed to attempt anything in the way of connected discourse. What is there in the qwerty home row that is of even fair frequency? Only a, as, add, and ask.

On Dvorak, the rawest beginner has access to numerous propositional phrases that might plausibly be a part of a letter, a report, a proposal, or a contract — "in the state and in the nation as a," "at the station," "in this situation," or, with the shift, "The United States Senate and House".

Thus the budding operator can congratulate himself with "I can type!" even before c f, l, or r has found a place in his kinesthetic memory. The satisfaction is considerable and is what the student needs at this point.

At least three, and probably all four, of the authors are well aware of the superiority of the Dvorak arrangement and its close variants. Some appreciate its potential. In spite of their affiliation with different publishers, let us hope they can learn to call each other colleague as often as competitor.

Parkinson is better

Friends and fans of Robert S. Parkinson, of Sunnyvale, California, will be pleased to learn that, according to his wife, Marie, his recovery from his long illness is going on fairly satisfactorily. A recent setback put him in a hospital, but he is pulling out of it all right.

QUICK STROKES 13, Spring, 1977, containing IBM statement on fair hiring for Dvorak-skilled operators. Fifty cents at Quick Strokes, Box 643, West Sacramento, CA, 95691. In California add tax.

DVORAK CONVERSION for Radio Shack TRS-80 micro-computer, \$10. Information \$2. Jon Etherton, S. 222 Elm, Apartment 2, Spokane, Washington 99204. Phone (208) 624-8474.

ASK SCM's—some in stock can ship pronto. 10% discount for cash with order only. ASK US for info. Belmont Adams, 4 Park Ave., Scarborough, ME 04074.

FOR RENT—One-inch videotape, "Typewriters: Dvorak Made a Better One", narrated by Albert C. Kolb, Carmel (California) Middle School, time 14 minutes and 19 seconds. Narrator and secretary demonstrate an interesting and innovative alternative to the standard keyboard. Motivates student interest in the typewriter and in developing skills. Per week, \$5. Quick Strokes, Box 643, West Sacramento, CA 95691.

"THE DVORAK SIMPLIFIED KEYBOARD: 40 Years of Frustration": 8-page, stapled author's reprint of *Computers and Automation* article. Written after invitation by Ralph Nader to speak on DSK. Very interesting text and illustrations. \$2 p pd. Bob Parkinson, 664 Gail Avenue, B-22, Sunnyvale, CA 97086.

"CHILDREN AT THE TYPEWRITER," A. E. Wiggam's summary, from *Science and Society*, of the Wood-Freeman report on typing as an aid in elementary-school subjects. Qwerty based but highly revelatory. Four sheets photocopy, \$2. Quick Strokes, Box 643, West Sacramento, CA 95691. California residents add 12 cents tax.

Schools regularly offering Dvorak instruction

*Credit DIF, the bulletin of
Dvorak International Federation, P.O. Box 73,
Portland, Oregon 97207*

Among private schools, Willamette Educational Center, Portland, Oregon, and Eugene Business College, Inc., Eugene, Oregon.

In the public sector, Clover Park High School, Tacoma, Washington; Sprague High School, Salem, Oregon; Carmel Middle School, Carmel, California; Portland Community College, Portland, Oregon; Chemeketa Community College, Salem, Oregon; Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon; Clackamas Community College, Oregon City, Oregon; Portland State University, Portland, Oregon.

Dvorak typewriter broadens enrollment base

By ALBERT C. KOLB
Carmel Middle School, Carmel

At Carmel Middle School there is a program considered to be a hedge against declining class enrollment. It is PERSONAL TYPING oriented toward the language arts and featuring the Dvorak typewriter.

The Dvorak typewriter is easier to learn and faster to use and less error prone. Get the video tape from the Monterey County Office of Education and hear all the arguments for Dvorak. It is entitled "Dvorak made a better typewriter".

Many seventh and eighth graders have learned Dvorak keyboard in five hours; i.e. type an alphabetical sentence without looking at the keys. Five and one half 55-minute class periods.

In one semester of Dvorak a student can learn two or more times as much as a student on a standard typewriter, (called Qwerty, from the letters in the upper left of the keyboard). In 12 weeks one student was typing 65 correct words a minute. Several students have typed at the end of the semester over 50 correct words per minute, (Gross words, minus errors, and divided by time).

After six years on Qwerty, the writer switched to Dvorak. This was three years ago. He now knows just what a waste the old machine is. It is no wonder that most people don't learn to use it.

Yes, most people don't type. Many because Qwerty is frustrating and awkward. It was designed over 100 years ago to slow the operator so that the machine would work.

The Dvorak is a better machine and should be offered to all students.

We all learned to read PRINT. Why not learn to write PRINT. Why not call our typing courses SPEED WRITING and encourage all students to learn it.

We can attract greater numbers of the college bound who need to learn to write rapidly, neatly, and easily. We can attract the students who find handwriting a labor and are doing less and less of it. Both of these groups of students generally don't want to take two semesters to learn the machine if one semester will do.

Quick Strokes

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